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Viewing cable 05LIMA2226, ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER ON HANDLING OF RELATIONS

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
05LIMA2226	2005-05-18 16:11	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Lima

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This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LIMA 002226

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/16/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PE](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER ON HANDLING OF RELATIONS
WITH CHILE

REF: A. SANTIAGO 1070

- [1](#)B. LIMA 2180
- [1](#)C. SANTIAGO 1011
- [1](#)D. SANTIAGO 1000
- [1](#)E. LIMA 2061
- [1](#)F. LIMA 2018

Classified By: Political Counselor Alexander Margulies. Reason: 1.4(b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Acting Foreign Minister Armando Lecaros, in response to a query from the Ambassador during a meeting on 5/16, stated that the Foreign Ministry has worked closely with President Alejandro Toledo in handling the crisis in bilateral relations with Chile over the latter's delivery of arms to Ecuador during the 1995 border war; that Foreign Ministers Manuel Rodriguez and Ignacio Walker almost had a joint declaration worked out, but the Chilean Government pulled back at the last moment, presumably in response to pressure from the Chilean Armed Forces; that Rodriguez will again attempt to reach an accord with Walker upon the former's expected return on 5/23 from an extended illness; and that if no accord is reached, the worst likely scenario would be for no/no movement forward on bilateral ties until the next Peruvian Government takes office in July 2006. Lecaros added that a solution could be reached if Chile put in writing what Foreign Minister Walker had already said publicly. The Acting Foreign Minister welcomed the Ambassador's interest in the issue, and said he thought it would be "positive" for a similar expression of USG interest to be made in Santiago. The Ambassador noted that the U.S. was following the issue with interest, but not/not trying to inject itself into this Peru-Chile bilateral matter. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador raised the ongoing crisis in

Peruvian-Chilean relations over Chilean arms deliveries to Ecuador during the 1995 border war (Reftels) during a 5/16 meeting with Acting Foreign Minister Manuel Lecaros. Lecaros explained that:

-- Contrary to claims by opposition politicians and some media commentators, Peru's response has not/not been influenced in any way by a desire to divert attention from the Toledo Government's domestic political problems.

-- The Foreign Ministry has been fully involved in developing the GOP's response, with Lecaros himself working side-by-side with President Toledo.

-- This is not a question of one arms shipment, as the GOC claims, but rather of multiple shipments that Peru believes occurred.

-- It is possible that Chilean President Ricardo Lagos is unaware of the additional arms shipments, as he expressed surprise when Toledo mentioned this at a dinner in Brasilia during the South American-Arab Summit.

-- Peruvian Foreign Minister Manuel Rodriguez and his Chilean counterpart Ignacio Walker almost resolved this issue in Morocco, during the late-March meeting of South American and Arab Foreign Ministers. The two developed a draft joint declaration that the GOC walked back from at the last minute.

-- The Peruvians suspect that objections from the Chilean Armed Forces scuttled the draft joint declaration, and that the Chilean military continues to exert influence over the GOC's public comments, judging from the tenor and tone of those statements.

-- Foreign Minister Rodriguez, who has been seriously ill for the past few weeks, is expected to return to his office on 5/23, and will make it a priority to work the issue.

-- While other efforts, such as an initiative by Peruvian Congress President Antero Flores-Araoz to discuss the issue with the leader of Chile's legislature, are welcome, a resolution can only be achieved through negotiations by the two Foreign Ministries.

-- GOP officials will maintain a closed mouth policy on the issue of bilateral relations with Chile for the time being, in order to facilitate talks.

-- If no/no accord is reached, the most likely worst case scenario would be that there will be no/no forward movement on bilateral ties until a new Peruvian Government takes office in July 2006.

-- Foreign Minister Walker had in one public declaration said that Chile acknowledged and expressed regret for the arms shipment in 1995 and reiterated that expression of regret now. Repeating the apology in writing in the present tense, Lecaros emphasized, is the key to resolving the dispute from Peru's perspective.

13. (C) Lecaros then asked the Ambassador what was the nature of USG interest in this issue, adding that if the Ambassador had not raised the matter he would have brought it up. The Ambassador noted that the USG is a guarantor of the Rio Protocol of 1942, that it has excellent relations with Peru and Chile, and that it desires to see friendly relations between the two countries restored. He explained that the USG is not/not seeking to involve itself in Peru-Chile negotiations, particularly as neither country has expressed interest in U.S. participation. Lecaros agreed, but replied that he was glad to hear of the USG's interest in the matter, and opined that it would be "positive" for the U.S. to make a similar expression of interest in Santiago.

14. (U) President Alejandro Toledo, in a 5/17 speech commemorating the 36th anniversary of the Andean Community of Nations, suggested that his government would like to see bilateral ties with Chile improve. Although he did not mention Chile specifically, the President stated, "We have other challenges and should not let ourselves be distracted by the issue of arms or of conflicts in the past. As Peru is not disposed to delve into other issues that have passed, we simply have to arrive at an agreement to resolve this. It would be a grave error to remain trapped in the past." When asked by the press whether his comments were intended as a positive gesture towards Chile, the President noted that Chile has invested over USD four billion in Peru, bilateral trade exceeds USD one billion, Chilean President Ricardo Lagos was the first to be accorded a State Visit from Toledo, who made a State Visit to Santiago in return. "We have a lot in common," Toledo concluded, but there is a pending issue that has to be resolved. How will it be resolved? We have left that in the hands of the Foreign Ministry."

15. (C) COMMENT: Foreign Minister Rodriguez will have his work cut out for him in trying to develop a formula that can

reconcile Peru's demand for a public apology with Chile's insistence that the matter was dealt with a decade ago. It probably does not/not help that both countries are entering into election campaigning, which can only restrict their respective governments' maneuver room. With respect to Lecaros' account, we note that Foreign Ministry Under Secretary for Political Affairs Oscar Murtua alluded to

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frustrated talks between the two Foreign Ministries in his 5/10-11 op-eds (Ref B), but did not provide the details Lecaros did. In addition, Prime Minister Carlos Ferrero, Congress Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Gustavo Pacheco, and the Foreign and Defense Ministries previously referred to Peruvian intelligence reports from 1995 to support their assertions that there were more than one shipment of arms by airplane (Refs B, D-E), although hard evidence to corroborate these reports has not/not been made public. END COMMENT.

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